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SAVING GREEK IN THE COLLEGE

If this paper needs a text, that text is to be found in the early sections of Plato's Republic, in the words of Socrates, *λαμπάδια ἔχοντες διαδώσουσιν ἀλλήλοις*. At this point in the famous dialogue the interlocutors are discussing the Torch Race. The purpose of this race was to pass on a burning brand from hand to hand of runners, or to light the torch in relays and thus carry a brand still lighted to a desired goal. The object was not speed: it was skill; it was devotion; it was attainment. The several participants were acting in harmony and accord; they were helping one another to perform a high service; they were passing on the torch each to the other that the successor in turn might be as successful as the one before him. Thus it was a noble and friendly rivalry; it was a contest in a serious and devoted service. It meant keeping the lamp alight in the face of difficulties and bringing it at length to the coveted goal.

There are two lessons or two groups of lessons which we may learn from the story of the Torch Race, as we consider the very important matter of saving Greek. In the first place, the object was to keep the brand lighted. We of to-day upon whom devolves the duty of keeping Greek alive are runners in a torch race. The burning brand is the Greek tongue itself. We feel ourselves called to this high post of duty to save for the future something quite worth saving. We call upon ourselves and our fellows to join in the race and to keep the lamp glowing. We have given our lives to the cause of Greek not for own personal pleasure; we have toiled to discover new thought in this field ever rich, not that we may prize our discovery and hoard it from the eyes of the profane; we have become Hellenists not for the sake of vainglorying in our work and in our discoveries. We are determined that the torch of Greek shall not be allowed to grow dim; we have decided to pass on our love for Greek, our deep and abiding belief in Greek, to those who follow us.

Knowledge is not to be won for the winner alone. He that has the torch of learning should pass it on to others.

The lamp of Greek has gone out in the Secondary Schools; this we may safely assume from the fewer and fewer graduates of High Schools and Academies presenting Greek for entrance to College. Now,

if Greek be not taught in our Secondary Schools, and if it be no longer presented for College entrance, we shall face the actual loss of Greek from our present life unless some other means be found for the preservation of this very excellent language and literature. Other runners must be found; if the School does not train them, the College and the University must shoulder the responsibility. These runners must not seek speed; that was not the chief aim of the runners in the Torch Race; he who carries the glowing brand must hasten slowly, as in all true education. So the College teacher of Greek must have patience to make slow and tedious progress, and his fellow-runners in the race must not go too swiftly; else they will cause the lamp to be extinguished. Skill and devotion were mentioned as two of the necessary requirements for completing in ancient times the Torch Race with success; these must be part of the equipment of the preserver of Greek in the College. He must have deep devotion to the cause of Greek; he must be able, if called upon, to defend the cultural ideal in this age of commercialism; he must show by his life, view-point, personality, that Greek has been the best thing in his experience, as it usually is with those who have read it aright. He must unite, with this devotion, the skill to impart, so that he may interest his students and convince the doubters.

The runners in the Torch Race were live, virile young men with red blood in their veins; there is no reason why Greek should appeal only to the effete and the pedantic; on the contrary no civilization which the world has seen was so sane and so sensible as that of ancient Greece. That was a civilization wherein the weakling of body as well as of mind could find no place. Greek does appeal to the healthy boy and the healthy girl of to-day; if Greek civilization, with its love of the beautiful in mind, in body, in letters, and in architecture, has ceased to make its appeal, the fault must rest with us, the teachers of Greek, or else the young men and young women of to-day do not care for culture, and do not recognize the beautiful and the good.

But the student of to-day can be awakened from his anti-Greek lethargy; in fact he is beginning to be awake to the opportunity given for becoming acquainted with Greek as he was in ancient days.

The end kept in view in the ancient Torch Race was the attaining of the goal with the brand still

lighted. Our attainment of a desired goal has at times been a detriment rather than a help. The student, when not properly guarded, falls easily into the habit of saying that he does not need a certain subject for College entrance, or, that he does not need to study Greek, for example, because he plans to enter a business career. The real purpose of a College education is not to fit one for a profession, but to open the eyes of the mind to the understanding of life. We as Greeks must be careful not to insist too much on the attainment or the definite reason for such attainment. The study of Greek has a twofold attainment as part of a College education; first, to gain a knowledge of the language for its own sake; secondly, to gain a knowledge of the literature for what it will do for the student when transmuted, transformed into his very personality and character. The study of Greek is its own reward. It will, of itself, if studied aright, make its influence felt. The young man or young woman reading Homer's *Iliad* or Aeschylus's *Prometheus* for the first time is uplifted, raised to a higher view of life; such reading works its change of itself; the reader is gradually transformed; his personality begins to take on the fineness and beauty of those great minds of old.

Surely no one can read Homer, Plato, Sophocles, Pindar, Herodotus, without being the better for the reading. The priestly Aeschylus leaves the soul stirred, elevated; the divine Plato leads the reader to think noble thoughts; the Father of History teaches the lesson of how the mighty fall, and humility, greatest of all virtues, sounds through his work. The sublime Sophocles exalts the reader; and matchless Pindar sets him a quiver with the joy of winning in a contest of skill and strength.

There was a friendly rivalry in the Greek Torch Race. Thus there should be a friendly rivalry and co-operation among the members of our guild. And happily there is. One danger is that some of us lose our better ideals in the University, where we spend so much time 'about it and about' that we sometimes forget what it is all about, and whether we are studying Greek language and literature or one scholar's opinion of another great scholar's discovery. Such training, necessary though it may be, will not be the leading factor in saving Greek in the College. What we need is more of the spirit of studying the Greek authors for their intrinsic thought and worth; we should study the Greek authors more for the contents and less for the form. The form, like all things else in Greek, is beautiful, but it must be permitted to make its own appeal; it may well be overlooked as the result of too much dissecting and analyzing. The members of the Greek guild of America should band together to run in this torch race for the saving of Greek, remembering that, if they pause too often to examine the ingredients of the beacon, the flame will flicker and go out.

A few years ago, Greek was a required subject for College entrance. It was a required course in most

Colleges for at least one year; in many of these two years was the minimum. It was a requirement for graduation at Waynesburg College, one of the older small institutions of Western Pennsylvania, when I went there in July, 1915, as President and Professor of Greek. But the very fact that Greek was a required course for entrance and graduation had done harm. Greek was the most unpopular of all subjects. To remedy this condition we decided to abolish Greek as an entrance requirement, retaining the four years' requirement in Latin, and to make Greek an alternate required course with Latin for the Freshmen and Sophomore years in College.

There are at present, in round numbers, one hundred candidates for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Waynesburg College. Of these, twenty-three, or more than twenty per cent. of the student body, are studying Greek. Of the entering class of thirty-four, fourteen are beginning Greek, instead of continuing with Latin, or are taking Greek in addition to Latin. Making Greek an alternate course with Latin drew students to the College, and to the Greek classes. Several students turned to Greek as a novelty, with the usual enthusiasm attendant upon the taking of a new course. An inducement may have been that the new president of the College is also the professor of Greek, but the writer is inclined to believe that this was a deciding factor in but few cases.

The class in Beginning Greek recites only three times a week; the lessons are long and nothing in the assigned lesson is omitted; all of the sentences in English into Greek are written on the blackboard by the members of the class, and studied, but only three such sentences are given each day; the instructor occupies the first five minutes of each hour in dictating from a list of words derived from Greek, in chemistry, biology, geology and mathematics. Later he intends to add to this list Greek words in other sciences, such as medicine, theology, architecture, and words in common use in conversation. This list has been eagerly taken down by the students, and has been looked forward to each day. The sentences of Greek into English are carefully translated, correctly pronounced and the forms identified; the last five minutes of the hour are again taken by the instructor for clearing the path for the next day's assignment, by the explaining of any particular difficulty which might prove discouraging. This term we are reading from Gleason's *Gate to the Anabasis* once or twice a week and we are to spend the spring term in reading selections from the *Anabasis* itself. These students, after one year of College Greek, will read next year, in the fall term selections from the *Odyssey* or the *Iliad*, in the winter term the seventh book of Herodotus, and in the spring term the *Apology* and the *Crito* of Plato. The following year they will have their choice of electing a year in the Greek drama, or an alternating course in the reading of selections from the Attic orators and from Thucydides. Thus they will have been introduced, in three years of

College, to the great authors of the various canons of Greek literature.

The interest in the Greek courses of the present year has not been limited to the class-room; several mature students, among them a man of fifty-seven years, came to me at the beginning of the term and asked that I should form another class in Greek for their benefit. I gladly complied and formed a new class of beginners to meet once a week for a conference, while they study during the week the three lessons assigned to the regular beginning Greek class. With these mature students, the inductive method of reading has been tried with some success; once a week they read easy stories; each new point is explained as it appears, while the students take note and thus make their own Greek Grammar in miniature. At the same time they are actually reading Greek. Such students seek after each point with avidity, and their eager questions are a source of delight to the teacher.

In all this teaching every part of Greek life and culture is considered, as time will permit. New books are added almost each week to a formerly meager Greek library. Lately we have become interested in Gardiner's Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals, the most recent acquisition. These books are added to meet the various interests of the students, as suggested by them. We have also introduced the students and the community to the leading journals of philology and archaeology. Two copies of *Art and Archaeology* placed each month in the library are eagerly sought. A recent number of the *Geographical Magazine* with its beautiful engravings of scenes in the Greece of to-day has gained friends for Greek, and many seekers after more light. One student learned that the modern Greek word for water in general use was not *hudor*, but *neron*, and this led me to brush up my Modern Greek and attempt to show in a general way differences between the Greek of Xenophon and the Greek of Venezelos; this has led naturally to discussions of the War in Europe and the position of Greece in that unspeakable conflict, and then to researches in Modern Greek history. We are trying to induce the only real live Hellene in the borough to come to the College and give us an informal talk on the Greece of his boyhood days. One of my students in Sophomore Greek makes repeated visits to the shop of this Greek and is undoubtedly imbibing a first-hand knowledge of the vernacular. Two other young men in the same class have become interested in the Greek of the New Testament and we now meet once a week, purely voluntarily, for an hour of study in the Acts of the Apostles in the original Greek. These young men are looking forward to the ministry as a profession, and I believe that their enthusiasm for St. Luke's good Greek has not been misplaced. The Third Year Greek class, after a hard term in reading the choicest books of the *Iliad*, had fully intended dropping the subject altogether, as they had finished enough to fulfil the requirements of two years of a

classical language, but to the surprise of the instructor they asked him if he considered them worthy to continue and to attempt the Prometheus of Aeschylus. Needless to say their desire was heartily reciprocated. They are now deep in the intricacies of the exalted Greek of the priest of tragedians, and are sympathising almost too much with the throes of the suffering Titan.

I believe confidently that Greek can be saved thus in any College in our land. They who have the torch must try to pass it on to others. That torch is not merely a thoroughly scientific knowledge of the language, important as that is; that torch must be a faith abiding, a hope cherished, and a love undying. Forcing Greek upon the student will only kill it. The student of to-day must be shown why, and the parents of our College students of to-day are also always ready with the query Why? Our reply to this query will depend largely and almost entirely upon our belief in a good thing. If they see us, the Greeks, going over to those charming courses styled Greek literature in English, they will soon lose faith in us, seeing that we have apparently lost faith in ourselves, and in our chosen calling.

It is the literature that we must save, but in the Greek tongue itself. The world needs it; it is the basis of true culture. Those who wisely decry the crowding out of our finer ideals by means of early and easy short-cuts to knowledge sufficient for a business career can find in Greek a powerful weapon of defence. Against the sweep of commercialism, we of the Greek guild must take our united stand. Let us still have the courage to hold our heads high and fight for our ideals.

Fellow Greeks, shall we save Greek in our Colleges and Universities, or shall we not? Grasp the torch just as it swings from the weary hand. Carry it with speed tempered with skill, with love and with devotion. Truly the cause is deserving; the call is one of necessity; the runners in the race are few, but they are very able. And they are endued with special gifts which come only to those who have lived with the great minds of antiquity. The battle is not to the strong: it never has been; the race is not to the swift: it never has been; they only win who love.

WAYNESBURG COLLEGE,
Waynesburg, Pa. HERBERT PIERREPONT HOUGHTON.

REVIEWS

The Dated Alexander Coinage of Sidon and Ake. By Edward T. Newell. Yale Oriental Series. Volume II. New Haven: Yale University Press (1916). Pp. 72, with 10 collotype plates. \$2.50 net.

Mr. Newell's latest contribution to the branch of Greek numismatics which he has made especially his own ranks higher, if possible, than its predecessors, as a model of careful research leading to illuminating results. To numismatists it will be especially interest-